

referendum and recall — measures” which were largely adopted in Washington and Idaho, and in other states (268), and in many other pieces of socially responsible legislation first introduced in the Northwest and widely imitated elsewhere. Maybe it is in the spirit of this populism that Schwantes answers with a history which is widely accessible and well priced and which will likely reinforce in the Northwest the traditions he sees as central.

Where Schwantes detects a history of Northwest environmental activism, I sense another connection in 1990s political fashion. Certainly several of the notions of Ecotopia (in Joel Garreau’s *Nine Nations of North America*; in poet Gary Snyder’s concept of the Ish nation; in occasional uses of the label Cascadia) necessarily include British Columbia.

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Winter Sports in the West, edited by E. A. Corbet and A. W. Rasporich.

Calgary: The Historical Society of Alberta, 1990. Pp. 148. Illus. \$11.95 paper.

To celebrate the eightieth anniversary of its founding, the Historical Society of Alberta combined resources with the University of Calgary to organize a pre-Olympic symposium whose general theme was the history of sports in western Canada. A published record of its proceedings, co-edited by E. A. Corbet and E. W. Rasporich of the University of Calgary, and containing ten of the papers presented during the conference, is currently available.

Greg Thomas’s essay “Sports and Leisure in the Nineteenth Century Fur Trade” leads off the proceedings. Well written and researched, this essay alone makes the book worth the purchase price. Thomas uses a combination of fact and poetry to evoke for the reader a view of how fur traders used their leisure hours. As one might expect, he notes that snowshoeing, canoeing, horseracing, and dancing were all favourite pastimes. However, he offers some surprises as well. Football, referred to by John McDougall as the “national game of the North-west,” was being played as early as 1734 at Churchill. The first recorded game was held on New Year’s Day and inaugurated a tradition of holiday football at various forts and settlements in the west. The most interesting section of Thomas’s essay evokes the boisterous and reeling swirl of activity that accompanied such colourful local dances as the York Factory Breakdown, the Hudson Bay Jig, and the Polar Bear Walk. Thomas also alludes to the games and dances

of the region's indigenous peoples in a later section of his thoughtfully prepared text and thereby sets the stage for Fraser Pake's essay: "Skill to Do Comes of Doing."

Pake centres his piece around the following analogy: "If the Battle of Waterloo was indeed won on the playing fields of Eton then we might be tempted to say that intertribal battles on the Plains were won in the play areas of the Indian Camps." When his essay remains within this territory Pake is both enlightening and stimulating, but a tendency to treat Alberta as though it provided the framework for sporting activity even before 1905 sometimes leads him astray. Prior to that year the province simply didn't exist, and certainly didn't boast a sporting tradition. Turner Valley and the early oil exploration, together with the proud ranching tradition of early Alberta, provided the economic security necessary to provincial sporting pride, but it was not until Leduc Number One blew in following World War Two that Alberta surged ahead of her prairie sisters Manitoba and Saskatchewan and began to make sporting gains on British Columbia, still the leader of the west in most endeavours of an athletic nature.

Curling was one activity dominated by the prairie provinces. Redmonds' well-documented work traces the growth of the "roarin game" in the curling rinks of the west. His earlier research, presented in his book *The Sporting Scots of Nineteenth-Century Canada*, provided the necessary background for this presentation. The essay published here shows how the game spread through the prairies to the Kootenays, where in 1898 Rossland hosted the first bonspiel in British Columbia. Curling truly found a home in the west, and it was fitting that it should be selected as a demonstration sport at the Calgary Games.

The glamour sport of today's winter scene is skiing. The scenic beauty of the Canadian Rockies has attracted skiers since the turn of the century. Bill Yeo of the Canadian Parks Services gives a rambling anecdotal presentation on the development of skiing in the Banff area. His carelessness concerning dates and the names of founding enthusiasts leaves this topic open for further research, especially on the introduction of skiing into the mountain parks of the west. Jorgen Dahlie limits his topic to the tradition of Scandinavian skiing in the Pacific Northwest, but despite its limitations, his contribution gives fascinating insight into the lives of the Scandinavian settlers in the Kootenay and the Cariboo. These men from Norway, Sweden, and Finland were in many ways the fathers of Canadian skiing simply because of their passion for the sport, an enthusiasm captured by Dahlie in a quotation taken from a Norwegian immigrant named Kaare Hegseth: "mining is our bread, and skiing is our soul."

The contributions of sporting women in the period between the wars is acknowledged in two essays. One, by Elaine Chalus, highlights the legendary Edmonton Commercial Graduates Basketball team. In a class by itself in the period that began in 1915 and closed in 1940, the team was described by James Naismith, Canada's inventor of the game of basketball, as the finest team ever to lace on sneakers.

Doreen Ryan presents another picture of women's sports in her excellent speedskating memoirs. Ryan, former Head of Athletes' Village at the Calgary Winter Olympics, is fondly remembered by all those Edmontonians who braved sub-zero temperatures to marvel at her speed and beauty as she sped to western glory on the speedskating oval located on "the Flats" below McDougall Hill. As the holder of fourteen Canadian championships, Ryan's personal observations of the world of speed skating in the 40s, 50s, and 60s are intriguing.

Morris Mott, a former National Team and NHL hockey player, now teaches in the History department at Brandon University. His essay deals with several dimensions of hockey history in Manitoba: the tensions between rural and urban communities, the entry of the working class into the sporting world, and the conflicts that arose between the proponents of athletic amateurism and athletic professionalism. He also debunks the thinking that differentiated the gentleman amateur from the professional by pointing out that amateurism was current at a time when Winnipeg and numerous smaller Manitoba towns were production centres for professional hockey players in the decades before and following the first great war.

Throughout the history of western Canada, sport has occupied a special place in the lives of its people. The volume under review makes a worthy start in examining the significance of that place, but much interesting and exciting historical information is still awaiting attention by serious scholars. However, like many non-traditional areas of study, sports history is suspect in the eyes of conservative academics who believe there is little to be learned from this, at present, sub-sub-discipline of historical studies. The editors and writers of *Winter Sports in the West* have bravely ventured to correct these misapprehensions and have added a valuable piece to the small body of literature concerned with leisure and sport. For this they should be commended.